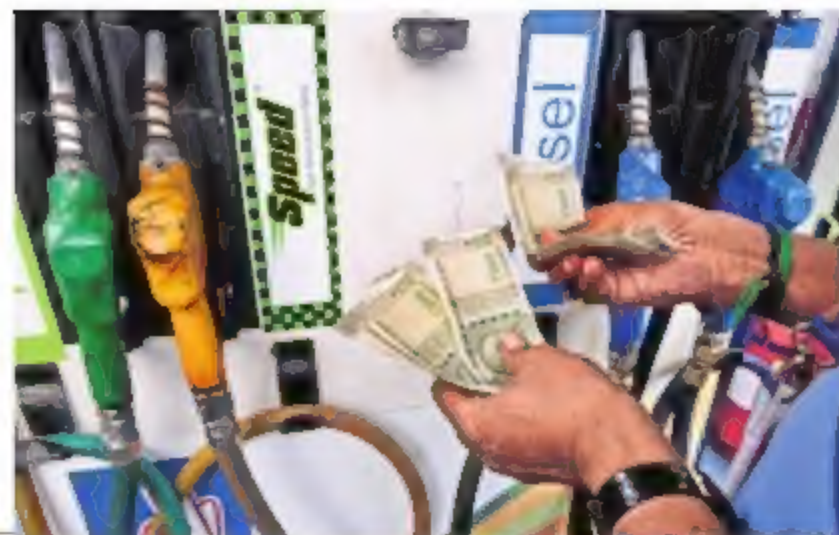




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OIL NEARS \$90 PER BARREL, AS SAUDI EXTENDS PRODUCTION CUT

Oil nears \$90 per barrel for the first time in 2023 as Saudi Arabia and Russia extended their production, export cuts till the end of the year

CENTRE MAY STRUGGLE TO HOLD PUMP PRICES

As India heads into a series of assembly elections, the Centre may find it difficult to control prices of petrol and diesel at the pump level. India imports 85% of its crude oil needs. The Centre last cut excise duty on oil in May to shield retail rates from going up. The crude price flare up comes at a time when the Centre was expected to cut rates ahead of polls

INDIA'S COMFORT LEVEL FOR OIL IS BELOW \$75

Petrol, diesel prices have been on a freeze for a record 17 months in a row. PSU fuel retailers are mandated to revise pump prices daily, but have not been able to do so because of inflation
If oil prices had been at \$73-74 a barrel range, oil companies could have restarted daily price revision based on 15-day rolling average | P13

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MONTH HIGH OF GLOBAL CRUDE PRICE AS PRODUCTION CUTS EXTENDED

Udhaya remark on Sanatana shocking: Modi

Asks his ministers to give a fitting response with facts; shares his dos and don'ts for G20

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR
@New Delhi

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday took strong exception to the controversial remarks of DMK leader Udhayanidhi Stalin against Sanatana Dharma recently.

"Such remarks on Sanatana Dharma are extremely shocking and highly condemnable. They need proper and justified response from all of us," he said at a meeting of his council of ministers, in what was his first reaction to the raging controversy.

Modi said their response, especially by those hailing from the South, should be dignified, logical and replete with facts and figures. He advised them to avoid name-calling and getting into a slanging match.

Modi also advised his colleagues to avoid going deep into history and instead speak on the contemporary situation.

Following Modi's directive, the BJP can be expected to sharpen their attack on Udhayanidhi. A few days ago, Udhayanidhi had called for the eradication of Sanatana Dharma

while likening it to viral diseases like dengue and Covid.

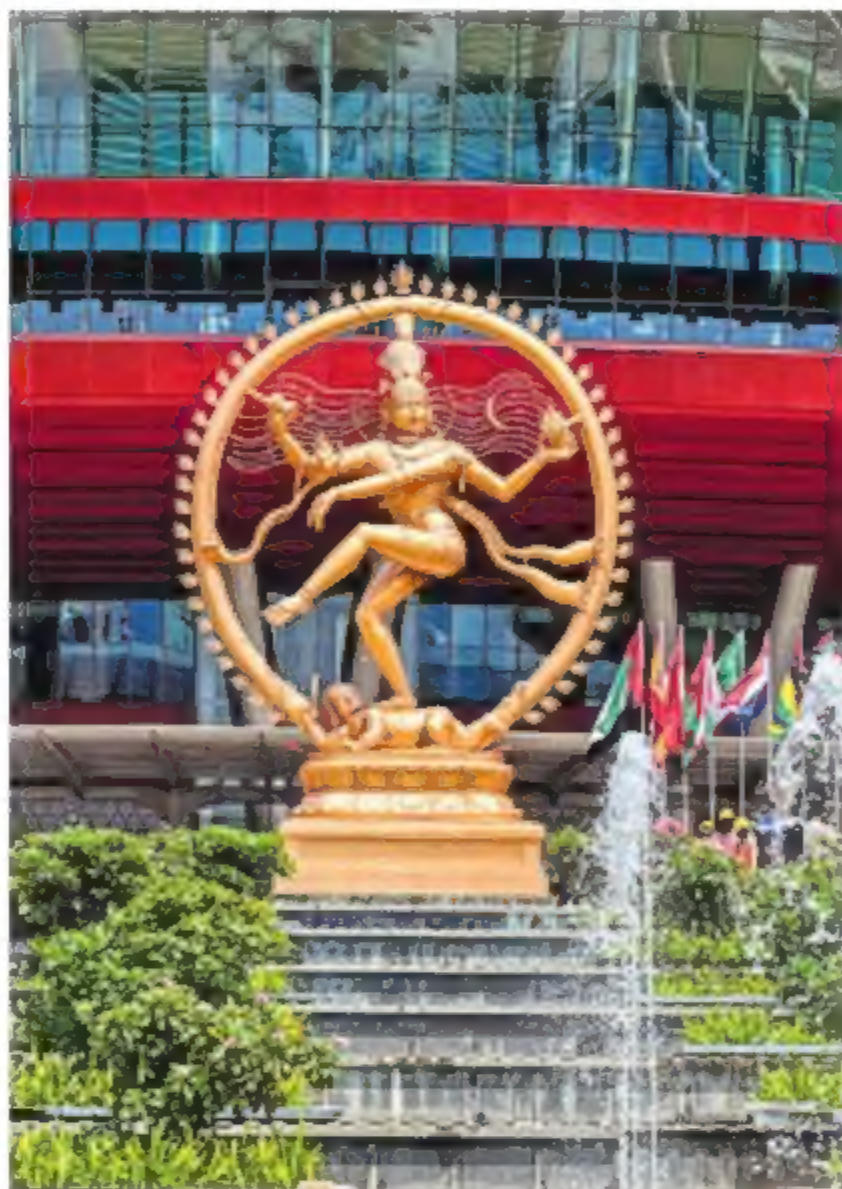
Meanwhile, an FIR was registered in UP against Udhayanidhi and Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge's son Priyank for allegedly outraging religious feelings. Udhayanidhi was booked for his call to eradicate Sanatana Dharma and Priyank for supporting his remark. Parallely, the Madurai

ASEAN-INDIA SUMMIT TODAY

Modi will participate in the 20th ASEAN-India Summit and the East Asia Summit on Thursday at Jakarta. "Engagement with ASEAN is an important pillar of India's 'Act East' policy," he said

the Bharat Mandapam and other venues of various meetings. He also suggested that they download the G20 India mobile app and make best use of it.

Besides, he advised them to treat the foreign dignitaries with utmost courtesy, recalling that *Aitihya devo bhava* (Guest is god) is the essence of Bharat's culture. The meeting was held hours before the prime minister left for Jakarta.



DANCE OF CREATION

A 27-foot Nataraja statue made of Ashtadhatu (eight-metal alloy) installed at the Bharat Mandapam in Delhi ahead of the G20 Summit on Sept 9 and 10. The 18-tonne statue was sculpted by Radhakrishnan Sthapathy of Swami Malai in Tamil Nadu | P11

FOOLPROOF SECURITY COVER

50,000 police personnel, K9 dog squads, mounted police to be deployed for foolproof security for the G20 Summit on Sept 9, 10

10 markswomen with rifle telescope to be stationed at strategic locations. They underwent a four-week specialised ITBP training course

Police to use chains and bolt cutters to tackle unscheduled agitations if protesters tie themselves with chains so that they cannot be removed

At G20 venue, special commissioner of police-rank officers will serve as commanders and DCP-rank officers as zonal commanders

SANATANA ROW

Parameshwara: I said nothing controversial

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

A day after Home Minister G Parameshwara kicked up a row by questioning the origin of the Hindu religion, he defended his statement on Wednesday and said that all he meant was religions came into existence for the good of mankind.

Taking part in the Teachers' Day function organised at his home constituency Koratagere in Tumakuru district on Tuesday, Parameshwara said, "It still remains a question when did the Hindu religion take birth and who gave birth to it. Buddhism was born in India. Jainism has its roots in India. Islam and Christianity came from foreign countries. But if you analyse, the summary of all these (religions) is to do good for mankind."

CONTINUED ON P4

SC relief for Editors Guild members

SHRUTI KAKKAR @New Delhi

THE Supreme Court on Wednesday directed the Manipur police not to take any coercive action against Editors Guild of India (EGI) president Seema Mustafa and three other journalists till September 11 in connection with two FIRs against them for offences ranging from promoting enmity between two communities to defamation.

The FIRs were lodged after the EGI published a report based on ground reporting by senior journalists Seema Guha, Bharat Bhushan, and Sanjay Kapoor. The report was critical of the state government's handling of the situation, and claimed that the authorities had "turned partisan" during the conflict. It also flagged biased reporting by some local media outlets and said that the protracted internet ban in the state was affecting media reportage.

A bench of Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud, and Justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Mishra